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July 2014

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
Office of the City Council

Dear Mayor Winstead,

Bloomington United for Youth (BUY) is a non-profit volunteer organization that for over 15 years has been committed to engaging the entire community in the positive development of youth. BUY is comprised of members from the Bloomington business community, service organizations, faith community, law enforcement, public schools, government and most importantly middle and high school youth. We are writing to share our concerns about the sales of electronic cigarettes and flavored, inexpensive tobacco products in Bloomington. Tobacco use is the number one cause of death and disease in our state. Unfortunately, most tobacco users start when they are young. Together we should do all that we can to prevent youth from ever starting to use tobacco and/or nicotine in any form. We believe that restricting tobacco use and youth access to tobacco and similar products is an essential part of creating a healthy community.

We recently learned about a new ordinance adopted by the City of Brooklyn Center. This ordinance increases the price of cheap cigars. Youth are price sensitive. As a result, the ordinance will make it less likely that youth will try cheap, flavored cigars. We would support a similar policy for the City of Bloomington as we find the ease of purchase of cheap, flavored cigars very concerning. Bloomington is a public health leader. By working on this issue, Bloomington can help lead others in the state.

BUY is also concerned about electronic cigarettes. These products are appealing to youth in that they are flavored in ways that appeal to youth and are high tech. We worry that more and more people will begin using these products in indoor spaces like restaurants. This will begin to re-normalize smoking, especially to youth who have grown up to this point without the presence of smoking in public places. Prohibiting indoor use of electronic cigarettes will ensure positive role modeling for youth who live in and visit our city. Bloomington was a national and state leader on clean indoor air policy. We hope that our city can continue to be a leader in this area by restricting indoor electronic cigarette use.

By restricting the sale of cheap cigars and prohibiting the use of electronic cigarettes indoors, you will be helping to create an environment where tobacco free is not only the norm, but also an expectation for upcoming generations. These actions will help youth make good choices and grow into healthy adults.

Kindest regards for your sincere consideration,

Members of Bloomington United for Youth

Bloomington United for Youth (BUY) is a volunteer organization that works to engage the entire Bloomington community in the positive development of youth.

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